

Social Care Fairer Charging Survey

Total Number of Surveys Posted = 757 (+ those left at consultation events)

Total Number of Responses = 204

- Q1. Do you agree that it is fair to charge people for the cost of services so that we can then offer a wide range of services for as many people as possible?

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither / nor	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
27	103	20	25	21	11

- Q2. At the moment we only take into account 65% of either Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance, and Severe Disability Premium when working out what to charge you for home care, day care and transport services. Do you agree that in the future we should take all of these allowances into account?

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither / nor	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
12	74	20	31	54	10

- Q3. The council has to balance its budget in this difficult economic climate. Which one of the following would you most prefer?

Increase in fees and charges	94
Providing fewer services	57

- Q4. Do you agree that after giving everyone the same amount of funding, we should take into account the rest of their income when working out what to charge them?

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither / nor	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
22	91	17	33	27	9

- Q5. As part of its Fairer Charging policy, the council helps people identify and claim all benefits that they are entitled to. Have you used this service?

Yes	105	No	54	Not sure	34
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- Q6. Some people have additional expenses because of their disability. Examples might include extra heating costs, or laundry costs, or additional costs of special diets. How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is fair to take this into account when assessing what they can afford to pay?

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither / nor	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know

Q7. How strongly do you agree or disagree that people who can afford (after a full financial assessment) to pay should be charged the full amount of service costs?

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither / nor	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
17	83	25	32	28	7

Q8 comments:

- I, as my wifes husband and carer have had to fill in this form as my wife suffers, amongst other things, with dementia. I can assure you that any further increase in costs except for inflation, RPI etc will mean that I will cancel any help from the council and will attempt at the age of 87 to look after my wife. I find it abhorrent that the council should attempt to increase cost of help for older people.
- People who have bought their own property through self denial and sacrifice, no car, no overseas holidays, no telephone, and who have the upkeep of this property, and saved over the years should not be penalised!
- Q4 & Q7 Take full account of disabled persons income, but unfair to penalise spouse, who may be trying to manage full cost of living and household
- I am over 90 yrs old, have my husbands Bucks Police Widows pension and my own old age pension so don't know how I stand. I pay income tax.
- I think that more care should be taken when dealing with elderly people such as I, who in their seventy plus, as it has taken a year to sort out my payments, which I should never had to pay. I got bills for payments even though I had letters to say I should not pay anything else this causes a lot of unnecessary distress. I have now got this sorted out, and all the money has been paid back to me.
- Satisfaction all around in my case
- Unless financially sound people over a certain age should receive extra funding
- Assessments should be checked properly before being sent out to elderly and disabled people who are afraid to check themselves because they cannot afford to pay (as it is what happened to us as the assessment was wrong)
- They should take into account more outgoings when assessing
- I am getting rather bored of filling in all these questionnaires: Not only do they come through the door but I have had persons visiting me and filling in more!! Surely you know who I am and how I think by now?!! I cancelled my carers from 28 Dec 09 you should know that!
- I already pay a lot for my services when you go back a few years I didn't have to pay anything. Do you take into consideration the extra money I pay for my day support to access different services.
- The should take into account more outgoings
- I would like to see the council (or central government) provide more financial support for nursing home residents, who become ineligible for Attendance Allowance just when their need becomes greatest.
- If people have got the money to pay for themselves then they should. I don't have day services or go to any groups so I should pay less.

- It would help if the monies charged could go towards the upgrade of the standard of care received at present
- I feel that all bills sent could have the time of care given for the four weekly service given, e.g. my carer is able to give the service I require in less than 15 minutes given time charged, but I am very satisfied with my present carer.
- Would prefer charges not to increase
- I think only the care element of DLA should be taken into account when assessing financial contributions. The SDP is to cover additional costs of living for being disabled such as heating, diet etc.
- Yes I do have comments but I've wrote a letter to you with this (letter scanned to customers file as name and address provided, and relates to care services in general rather than purpose of consultation)
- The council tax system is based on property value and not 'means tested', so it is not appropriate to change the basis of charging to a means based system. The council should focus its services on those that relate to help and support for the 'person' directly especially the old and infirm. The construction of this survey is too restricting and will not provide people with the opportunity of putting their view forward. Questions are 'too' restricted. Someone needs to learn how to construct meaningful surveys.
- I am proud and delighted with the service offered at the moment. You have a very good team.
- Would have more outgoings if I could shop and buy necessities I need i.e. phone I could hear (bedroom), water filter – many things
- The council should not put at risk the elderly because it needs to balance its own budget
- Reference should be given to those with elderly full-time carers who get no financial or physical assistance and need regular respite/day care facilities in order to care
- The council should differential between council and NHS charges
- City of York council must manage more effectively and divert funds to the most needed areas and reduce funding to the inept and feckless in our society!
- This is not the best laid out survey I have ever seen. Too many options to confuse old people. A 1-5 system is better. Why charge old people at all. No salt on roads and footpaths
- All charges should be proportionate to income and ability to pay – in many cases it is the family of people that incur cost by looking after, cleaning etc, to these old people
- It's cold upstairs where I sleep. I have the attic cleared out. I am just waiting for the insulation being laid – a warm front
- Services provided are good when achieved but far too much red tape and regulating services should be able to suit individuals. Not all people have standard problems
- Q3 is far too simple to answer – as a council I expect you to offer good services to those who need it but not offer services that are covered by other government departments, or to spend money on things that are not a necessity. Look to your own excesses before penalising the elderly and infirm.
- Having always been independent by cycling everywhere, I find taxi fares exorbitant yet necessary for clinics, shopping, going to church and other essentials.
- In an ideal world we shouldn't have to pay, I think quite high charges for care. At the moment my mother in law doesn't need much care, some families need financial support from grandparents – it is a difficult situation. Some people are lucky enough to be able to pay easier than others. I don't know – I do as much as I can for my mother in laws care. She only has me, in other families there is a big family so they can share the help they give.

- If fees are increased – full financial situation should be considered. Increase in line with inflation.
- There are 2 sides to the story. Very often my carers cannot spend all the time allocated to me because they have to rush to another job, nor do they always do things correctly, so we have to ask for emergency help. I do not ask for a reduction when I receive only 15 mins instead of 30 mins for example.
- If you take the cost of these stupid surveys away – money could be better used on providing services. What is this cost: Printing, Labour, Postage!!!
- Yes, I think you should have half disabled people with different incomes and on different benefits on your committee. Otherwise how can you possibly understand how we have to manage, you can't. You need their input very much especially those that have to live solely on benefits. Can you please keep me informed as to what you think as I really feel strongly about this subject.
- The charging level is appropriate for the services currently provided. * You had better make sure that if increases are made then the level of service and care increases dramatically*
- What difference does it matter in question 10 what ethnic group I belong to when assessing charges? This survey is a complete waste of time and money.
- I think it is very wrong to take our DLA off us we do not want to be ill. It is not our fault we have a disability – spend 24 hours with me and see how I manage!! How would you feel if you had a disability – would you be able to cope? I think not. I had to fight very hard for my DLA. I am very disabled and I don't know how long I have got to live. This is not your life – how would you like it or cope?? I need a better quality of life each day. The carers do not get paid enough for what they do. My DLA money is all I have I still have to pay my bills as well. I think this is a bloody cheek to take 65% of DLA off us. There is a lot of fat cats working for the council,
- People who have been careful and tried to live within their means and save a little should not be adversely treated against people who have had similar incomes and 'blown it'. Charges could be estimated from the day a benefit is given to save a big bill 12 weeks later. Mum is fine as I look after her finances but others may be less careful and not save towards the fees 1st invoice.
- I cannot answer until I knew what I have to pay. I already pay for Bath, Car and a cleaner and I have someone to help with midday meal.
- I think the biggest waste of money is local parish councils
- Attendance allowance has to pay for help which the council do not provide
- These questions do not take into account council wastage, such as continuous questionnaires and surveys that employ 3rd party organisations at a huge cost to council tax payers. By combating this waste of money, services will not need to be cut.
- The charging policy is very unfair to us that need more help. I still have to live you know. It is not our fault we have illness, disabilities or mental health problems we do not ask for this. It is bad enough asking for help then not getting it or having to pay too much for a poor service. There are too many fat cats working for the council, I would like to see how they would cope with an illness or disability 24 hours a day 7 days a week. My illness and disability does not disappear because I have help, 24/7 365 days a year. I don't mind paying some of the charges if I were to get a good service – at the moment they are crap and I am sick of putting in a complaint and nothing gets done!! Would you like to spend time with me and see how much is a struggle everything is day in day out?? There are too many fat cats sat on their arse that do not care about us – talk about 'blow you Jack I'm alright' they would soon get the proper healthcare it is was them. My health and quality of care is very poor. I have to take it one day at a time my social worker is crap and so are the management of city of York council. I would be better of dead – this would suit you all – where can I go for help? You don't make it easy. How can I live when you have taken all

my money off me for crap care!! Does anyone care about this – the services are very poor for what we pay for – nothing gets done anymore.

- It seems that we have contributed into the pot and now its time to collect, the monies have been frittered away unnecessarily on people who have no work ethic. And I believe this is just a tick box exercise!
- It seems to be that all of this form filling is a waste of time and resources because your mind is made up. This is just a form of telling people about some more cuts which the ordinary people fill the pinch
- For all the above questions there should be some element of discretion on individual basis
- As one has paid NI contributions throughout the working life, these services should be free for all irrespective of their savings
- I'm not sure that there is any point asking me because I think a decision has been made.
- Would be nice to receive as many services without extra charge
- Thank you for services available to us. York helpers are doing a good job – thank you

Other comments:

- Q3 – No charges
- Q3 – Neither
- Q1 – The question is ambiguous. If it is meant ‘it is fair to increase charges’ them my answer would be strongly disagree
- Q3 – Neither
- Q3 – Neither – Provide efficiencies/less waste in other areas
- Q1 – Dependant on financial status
- Q3 - Neither
- Q3 – Don’t know
- General – Carers – I used to put ALP on timesheets (as little as possible). Carers are not even first aid trained ‘I’m not a nurse I’m told’. So many different carers. 1 carer cooks if I am lucky. Carers need specs and hearing aids.
- Q3 - Not Sure
- Q3 – Don’t know
- Q3 – None
- Don’t penalise pensioners with modest savings
- Q3 – Not sure
- Q3 – None of these
- Q1 – It all depends on how much you charge?
- Q3 – Neither
- Q3 – Neither – the council needs to manage these issues more effectively and move resource from elsewhere
- Q3 – Neither
- Q3 – Neither
- Q2 – Difficult for old people to understand

- Q3 – Nil Unfair question to old people
- Q4 – They are old and need looking after
- Q1 – This is already happening
- Q3 – Neither
- Q3 - Neither – fees should not be increased any further
- Q3 – It needs to depend on each individual
- Q3 – Neither
- Q4 – Population increasing therefore more contribution to council funds!
- Q4 – Don't understand the question is all have funding
- Q3 – Not a fair question
- Q3 – I do not agree with either – I suggest you use less on cycle lanes for example!
- Q3 – A lot of the services are crap anyway
- Q3 – Don't know
- Q1 – I do not think it is fair to charge us for the cost of a service we cannot help being ill or disabled and we get a crap service
- Q2 – You should not take people's DLA. It is not their fault they have a disability. I had to go to high court to get me DLA, it took me a long time and I won my case. You don't know the struggle I have.
- Q3 – The services we get now are crap anyway
- Q4 – No you should not. We still have to live and pay our bills. We get very little help as it is I struggle very much every day
- Q6 – Lots of people need help because of their illness, disability or mental health
- Q7 – We do not get value for money with the services they are crap at their jobs rushing all the time and not doing their work correctly
- Q3 – Not a fair question
- Q3 – Not a fair question
- Q3 – I agree with neither
- Q3 – N/a
- Q3 - Neither

From: Sian Balsom

Subject: Fees and Charges for Social Care - Survey Response from York Independent Living Network

Hello,

It was good to meet you both at York Independent Living Network's meeting on 14th December 2009. The group appreciated you coming in to explain your ideas for changing the way people's care contributions are calculated.

After you left the meeting, the group continued to discuss the proposed changes. They felt that there was a need to give people time to understand what the changes would mean for them, so that it was possible to give full and frank feedback about them.

The group has some specific concerns relating to the proposals. One, as raised in the meeting, is how the proposed changes will work for people who are using the Independent Living Fund. Another relates to how costs like heating and food will be taken into account, which feels even more pertinent given the current weather conditions York is experiencing. The group also asked how this proposal fits with the Local Area Agreement for York, particularly NI136 and NI142.

There was also specific concern about the way the survey form has been phrased. For example, question 3 has an air of Hobson's choice about it. The choice given is stark - accept a reduction to your benefits, or your services. There is no genuine sense of exploring the very real problems people will encounter if such a change is being brought in.

In general terms, the group is concerned that due to the current difficult economic conditions, people may forget the reasons why non means-tested benefits were originally brought in. These were meant as a small acknowledgement that disabled people are more likely to be living in poverty than non-disabled people. Disabled adults are twice as likely to live in low-income households as non-disabled adults and this gap has grown in the last ten years.

A report on the additional costs of disability suggests that the income of disabled people solely dependent on benefits, irrespective of the type or level of their need, is approximately £200 less than the weekly amount required for them to ensure a minimum standard of living. These figures suggest that, even without including personal assistance costs, benefits meet only:

- 28 per cent of the costs of people with low-medium needs;
- 30 per cent of the costs of people with intermittent/fluctuating needs;
- 35 per cent of the costs of deaf people and people with visual impairments;
- 50 per cent of the costs of people with high-medium support needs.

It is clear therefore, that further steps are required to increase the funds for disabled people, rather than reduce them.

As non means-tested benefits are retained if disabled people take steps to get back into employment, it can help them avoid the poverty trap of being better off without working. By taking non means-tested benefits into account in calculating social care this effectively removes them. This may lead to more disabled people having no incentive to work and becoming caught in the poverty trap.

Whilst we are aware that the situation in York is generous when compared with other similar local authorities, the recent article in the York Press suggests actual spending on Adult Social Care is lower than in other areas. Most studies conclude that disabled people's needs are not met fully through social care services and that the cost of private provision to meet these needs is not covered by extra benefit costs. As a result, carers, unpaid relatives and friends are thought to be bearing the costs of ever-tighter eligibility criteria in accessing social care services. In terms of meeting the National Carers Strategy outcome of ensuring carers are able to have a life outside of caring, the maintenance of existing income levels would appear to be a minimum requirement.

This would have a knock-on detrimental effect on the economy of York, reducing the money circulating within the city. If disabled people are left behind as York moves out of recession, this will have a negative impact on the whole city. Studies have shown that in areas where there are greatest inequalities between the richest and poorest in society, the perception of this imbalance leads to increased dissatisfaction and negative perceptions amongst the whole community.

Living in poverty has an acknowledged impact on both physical and mental well-being. By reducing the funds available to disabled people, the knock-on impact on their health could lead to increased support needs, thus increasing the burden on social care services.

The reduction in available funds for disabled people will have a further detrimental impact on life in the city. As the funds available to disabled people are reduced, this will stop them being able to access the city as regularly, and may lead to them becoming increasingly isolated. As disabled people become a

less frequently visible part of society in York, this increases their vulnerability, as they become increasingly perceived as 'other'. This could reduce understanding and tolerance, and may lead to increased instances of hate crime. This in turn will increase disabled people's reluctance to go out into society, increasing their social isolation and reducing their physical and mental well-being. Far from the social model ideal of changing society to make genuine inclusion a reality, this will reverse the recent progress made, leaving disabled people trapped in their own homes.

Other developments, both within York and nationally, have led to increased costs for disabled people. Shopmobility has recently announced a 20% increase in their charges. Recent changes to car tax have hit disabled people hard – people who need large vehicles to transport equipment like wheelchairs, walking frames, ramps and oxygen cylinders are struggling to pay the higher taxes. Coupled with the current high cost of fuel, this has reduced the income disabled people have available to use their car regularly. This again leads to increased social isolation and a less visible disabled population.

Our aim as a group is to help build a more inclusive society where disabled people are accepted and valued. In order for this to be a reality, it is essential that disabled people have adequate resources to live full and active lives. To lift disabled people out of poverty and enable them to be active York citizens, we believe that not only must existing benefits be protected, but we must push for benefit levels to be increased, and nationally for costings relating to adequate income standards for disabled people in terms of paying appropriate rates of benefit and meeting the extra costs of living with an impairment.

We appreciate that at the current time, difficult financial decisions have to be made. However, it is our firm belief that the priority must be protecting those at most risk of disadvantage, and unfortunately at this time disabled people undeniably fall into this category. We urge the council to look for other areas where savings can be made.

I hope this feedback is useful to you. If you have any questions regarding this email, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,
Siân Balsom

On behalf of York Independent Living Network

Households Below Average Income 2004/05, Department for Work and Pensions, 2006.

² *Disabled people's cost of living: More than you would think*, Noel Smith et al, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2004

³ See, for eg, *The state of social care in England 2005-06*, Commission for Social Care Inspection

York Older People's Assembly welcomes being consulted on possible changes being considered for Social Care Services in York. The proposals focus on the extent that Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance should be taken into account when calculating the amount individuals must pay towards the cost of care.

Attendance Allowance in particular is of direct relevance to older people in York since it is only payable to those over 65. We are advised that some 760 customers out of a total of 1300 receiving care would be directly affected if changes were made to the present arrangements where 65% of the allowance is taken into account in arriving at the charge to be made to individuals.

At present Attendance Allowance is paid at two rates £47.10/week where care is required during the day and £70.35/week when care is required both day and night. It is payable as a tax-free benefit when an individual has a physical or mental disability which is severe enough to require help to care for the individual. The allowance is ignored entirely as income when calculating entitlement to other income related benefits like Housing and Council Tax benefit or Pension Credit.

It is accepted that the payment is related in part to a recognition that an individual could not remain independent without assistance from others. Since the Assembly strongly supports and advocates the wishes of older people to remain as independent as possible for as long as is possible the implications from changes could have detrimental effects.

For many older people care services provided or arranged by the City Council form only part of the support needed for them to retain their independence. Additional heating, telephone and taxi costs together with the costs associated with special dietary requirements all have to be met. The retained part of the Attendance Allowance is vital in helping with these expenses which are out with direct services provided.

At present on the higher rate of allowance at £70.35 an individual retains £20.43 to meet these additional costs. The proposals before us would reduce this sum to £14.07 per week or absolutely nothing if 100% of the allowance were taken into account.

We are advised that the proposals, if implemented, would raise between £180,000 to £300,000 per annum. This represents between 0.45% - 0.75% on a Social Services budget of £40m.

The Assembly whilst understanding the financial difficulties facing the Council believes alternative approaches could be adopted to address these challenges. The Assembly repeats its commitment to enabling older people to remain independent in their own home wherever possible. Reducing the extent that Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance is available to older people to achieve their own wishes is seen as a backward step.

The Assembly believes that the continued over dependence on institutional care whether in a Residential Home or Nursing Home is both costly and runs counter to the wishes of older people themselves. York provides a significantly greater proportion of residential places per 1000 older people in its own elderly person homes than comparable authorities. Such provision also operates at a significant deficit believed to be in excess of £300,000 per home per annum. The Assembly believes an alternative approach might be to close or convert certain Homes to Extra Care Housing Schemes similar to the well-regarded provision at Glen Lodge or Barstow House. Such an approach would allow older people to retain their independence, receive appropriate support when required and be far more cost effective.

The Assembly also believes that a substantial and sustained expansion of both Telecare and Telemedicine would assist in reducing the need for older people to require access to Residential or Nursing Care or indeed secondary care. Partnerships with the PCT and York Hospital to expand the provision of Telemedicine would bring cost benefits to each and most importantly allow older people to sustain their independence for longer.

In summary if the Council is still minded to pursue the variations to Attendance and Disability Allowances then the rise to 80% is seen as the least unacceptable. However it would be helpful for older people to understand the basis on which the higher levels of allowances are to be taken into account. The Assembly however believes that the alternative approaches suggested in this response should be explored with urgency.

11th January 2010